

National Forest Advisory Board Meeting

September 21, 2016

Mystic Ranger District

Members Present:

Chairman Dick Brown, Dave Brenneisen, Bob Burns, Jennifer Hinkhouse, Perry Rahn, John Gomez, Dave Hague, Luke Ortiz, Linda Tokarczyk, Jeanne Whalen, Patty Brown, Danielle Wiebers, Lon Carrier, Josh Van Vlack, Craig Tieszen, Wayne Bunge, David Miller, Alice Allen, Katie Ceroll (for Kelly Hepler)

Members Absent:

Ben Rhodd, Mary Zimmerman, Lauris Tysdal, Nancy Trautman, Derek Nelson, Victoria Sprague, Derek Alexander, Keith Haiar, Dennis Yellow Thunder, Tony Leif, Mike Verchio, Jessica Crowder, Kelly Hepler, Susan Johnson

Forest Service Representatives:

Mark Van Every, Jerry Krueger, Scott Jacobson, Beth Doten, Twila Morris, Ryan Thomas, Kelly Honors, Blaine Cook, Ralph Adam, Annie Apodaca, Rhonda O'Byrne, Steve Kozel, Ruth Esperance, Karen Hartman, Shirlene Haas, Dave Mertz, Jessica Eggers

Others:

Approximately 10 members of the public were in attendance. Four Congressional Representatives were also in attendance; Mark Haugen (Thune – R, South Dakota) Mike Bekaert (Rounds – R, South Dakota) Brad Otten (Noem – R, South Dakota) Deanna Kay (Enzi – R, Wyoming).

Introduction & Welcome:

Brown: Call the meeting to order, 1:00 p.m. Good afternoon, Welcome to the September 21st Advisory Board meeting. We would like to welcome the public and our members. We have a few special things we need to do today; I'll turn it over to Jerry for introductions.

Krueger: It is my pleasure to introduce my boss our new Forest Supervisor Mark Van Every. We are extremely fortunate to have Mark on board; please feel free to stop in and see Mark; and welcome Mark to the Forest.

Van Every: It is great to be here; I'm really thankful that we have a group like this to work with. It's a great opportunity to interact with folks that have a stake in what happens on the Forest. I have only been here one month, but I have a lot of good people here to help me. I'm enjoying the Forest; getting to know the area and the people. Again, really glad to be here, looking forward to working with all of you and to learn from all of you.

Bobzien: Presentation to Jim Scherrer.

Scherrer: Speech

Brown: Before we get started, I would like all of the Board members to introduce themselves for Mark's sake. Also for your information, Scott passed out a copy of the Charter which has now been approved.

Approve the September Agenda:

Brown: We would like to approve the agenda that is before you; motion made by Craig Tieszen second by Alice Allen. Are there any comments or observations? All in favor say aye, opposed say nay; the September agenda is approved.

Approve the June 15th Meeting Notes:

Brown: The next item of business is to approve the June 15th meeting notes. Motion made by John Gomez second by Josh Van Vlack to approve the April meeting notes; are there any comments or observations? All in favor say aye, opposed say nay; the June 15th meeting notes are approved.

House Keeping

Van Every: Restrooms out both side doors; emergency exits also out the back and front doors.

Brown: Thanks to everyone who was with us on the field trip in August; it was just outstanding. On behalf of the Board we want to thank the Team, Scott and Jerry. One thing you do get from these field trips is a real sense of what is happening on the Forest.

Jacobson: Thanks to all of you who did attend; please let us know if there are any changes you would like to see made to the field trip for next year. A good meal was provided by the Boxelder Job Corps Center. Several stops on Forest; good presentations.

Meeting Protocols:

Brown: Welcome to the members of the public and thank you for being here today; delighted that you are here. This committee is made up of 16 areas of interest, the members are appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. Our role is representing specific interest areas and providing advice to the Forest Supervisor. The primary purpose of this meeting is for information about Forest issues. We provide 15 minutes for general public comment at the end of each meeting. If we do not have time for that, we urge you to visit with your designated representative; by writing or in person. We first provide an opportunity for the membership to provide comment, on occasion we will make exception to that and take comments from the public during presentations. This Board is approved by the Secretary of Agriculture; to assist the Forest Supervisor by offering advice on a broad range of issues. Please mute your cell phones.

Hot Topics

Legislative Updates – Federal

Brown: Next we'll have our Federal delegations give us an update; we'll start with Mark Haugen from Senator Thune's office.

Haugen: Thank you, welcome Mark, look forward to working with you. A lot of irons in the fire, and I know you'll be taking up the land exchange bill later; that will be marked up tomorrow.

I'd like to talk about the Prescribed Burn Bill that the Senator introduced quite some time ago. Ag Committee hearing last week. The overall bill was in regards to fire management and fire funding; on the fire management side it was about loosening of NEPA and expanding categorical exclusions. The fire funding side is one we hear more about especially given all of the large fires going on right now. In this instance it amended the Safford Act which funds FEMA so it put firefighting expenses under FEMA along with other natural disasters such as flooding, blizzards, etc. This is just the major fires, the budget busters; these are the ones that will go over to FEMA.

With the mark-up they debate the amendments. They also vote on the amendments to the bill – that bill passed 11 to 9. The amendments to it included the Prescribed Burn amendment, we had four versions, a two part bill; one dealing with consulting prior to prescribed burns more than has been done in the past; also set some limits on what Smokey Bear says the top two fire dangers that you couldn't have prescribed burns during those times. Then the other part of it is – you start it, you're responsible for it; that is an off shoot of the Lemmon fire and caused a lot of private damage.

The Forest Service said that Thune's Bill would cost them \$10 to \$50 million over the next 10 years; that would be how much private damage may be caused in the next 10 years. This is a budget neutral bill so we have to find a way to pay for it. Still looking for a way to pay for the bill and we will find that eventually.

So we introduced the other bill that just had the land management portion in it, with the prescribed burn restrictions, etc. That passed unanimously so that was attached to the Bill that ultimately passed 11 to 9. We mostly likely will not have this taken up this year; the other side of things though, the Senator's portion, his amendment, since it was passed unanimously we're looking at getting it what they called "hot lined" for unanimous consent to get it through the Senate. The result of that is that we've seen a lot more cooperation and communication especially with the grasslands that we were concerned about. The rangers are meeting with counties, meeting with neighbors, they've adjusted boundaries based on those suggestions, and so they've really done a good job and we commend them for that.

Whalen: I really support this, and when you look at a Forest Service (FS) fire, it's not just FS who are responding, it's also volunteers, and it is not just Federal government money it is our money. So I really think that this is a great idea because of the impact on Volunteer fire departments who have to respond to a mistake that someone else made.

Haugen: I would also like to say that this is not just FS, we use FS kind of as all encompassing, mostly because they've been the most vocal about this; we haven't heard much from the Park Service, or BLM; but it does include all land management agencies.

Brown: Thank you Mark. If there are no questions for Mark, we'll ask Mike Bekaert from Senator Rounds' office for his update next.

Bekaert: Welcome Mark, this is also my first meeting. I did get the privilege to go on the field trip and I did learn a lot from that.

Our senator is on four committees; Armed Services, Banking, Veterans Affairs, and Environmental Public Affairs and EPW. He was a past Governor, so he's very familiar with the Forest.

Hearings this year:

- Water Resources Development Act; this legislation authorizes the 25 critical Corps of Engineer projects. The Agency lacked appropriate direction from Congress to implement these projects; the WRDA will give the direction they need to follow through with these projects.
- Indian Health Services; working on that for the locals.
- EPW; the Senator held a subcommittee with the superfund and waste management; hearing focused on regulation regarding Waters of the US.

I'll keep this short today; if anyone has any questions, please let me know.

Brown: If no one has any questions for Mike, we'll move to Brad Otten with Representative Noem's office.

Otten: Thank you and welcome Mark. Washington DC is all consumed with the continuing resolution right now to keep our Government funded; largely being led by the Senate side; should be extended to December 9th. The house is working on some small appropriations along the way to keep us funded through the rest of the year.

I'd like to mention a couple of legislation pieces that are of interest to this Board; and you can find more information on these at congress.gov.

HR845: The National Forest System Trail Stewardship Act; this is to try to get more volunteers into the Forest.

HR5871: Spearfish Canyon Land Exchange Bill.

HR6029: Prescribed Burn Approval Act.

HR2647: Emergency Wildfire and Forest Management Act; provides a way for the FEMA funds.

HR3839: Cemetery Transfer Bill; this takes the 200 acres from BLM and gives it to the cemetery administration to keep that secured for years to come.

I did take the field trip too; it was great to get out and see the projects first hand and who was working them. I always appreciate that event. With that, are there any questions?

Brown: Thank you Brad. If no one has any questions for Brad, we'll hand it over to Deanna Kay with Senator Enzi's office.

Deanna Kay: Thank you. Most of my comments are the same as what has already been mentioned.

The Senator is involved in helping get the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act passed this year. He also does support the budget for wildfires and is working with that as the budget committee chairman. The CR has been mentioned.

Fun happenings in Gillette the next couple of weekends; The Energy Aid event the Senator will be there to help to help raise funds for those who were hurt by the downturn in coal. October 1st there will be an Inventors Conference this is free and open to the public.

Brown: Thank you for that report; are there any questions for Deanna? If not, we'd like to go to the State for reports from Wyoming and South Dakota. We'll start with Senator Tieszen.

Tieszen: Thank you Mr. Chairman; important for the legislature is that we're all up for election, 30 to 40 new members when we convene in January, including most of the leadership. Many new faces and changes.

Summer studies this year included everything from nursing homes to methamphetamine. Issues we'll take up in January. Medicaid expansion will be the big issue; the Governor is bringing a plan to expand Medicaid in South Dakota through an agreement with Indian Health Services that will impact health care on our reservations. There will be a mighty fight in the Legislature, he cannot and will not move forward without the majority of the Legislature behind him. That will be the big issue this year along with 500 various other bills.

Brown: Thank you for that report Senator. We'll turn it over to Jeanne for an update from Wyoming.

Whalen: Cynthia Lummis' term will be over in December; we will miss her. I would like to ask Jennifer to explain the bill regarding the bark beetle funding. The Ag Committee is trying to get permanent funding for forest health. Working on the Wyoming legislatures to join in. The Conservation District was able to get grants to pay for cutters and spotters, but now the Conservation District has to get the work done first, and then submit the invoice for reimbursement; so we need to find the money to front it.

Hinkhouse: Joint Ag Committee meeting in Fort Washakie, keeping it bark beetle funding; there is resistance to change it to Forest Health. Also the timing of when the funding will be released is up for debate. It's hard to get it passed when the funding is declining.

Brown: Thank you Jeanne, are there any questions for Jeanne or Jennifer? If not, we'll go ahead and keep moving; we'll turn it back over to you Mr. Supervisor for the Forest Service Hot Topics.

Sturgis Motorcycle Rally ~ Mark Van Every

Van Every: Thank you. I also want to say that I look forward to learning from all of you and listening to your interest and needs; I know that you're not here for the compensation that you get (laugh), but because you have a passion and interest in the issues.

Motorcycle rally, very active busy time of year throughout the Black Hills. Relatively successful; lower attendance, no big issues or challenges, the usual things with some additional fire and law enforcement activities, but nothing that created any major problems or issues on the Forest.

Experience the Outdoors Day

Van Every: Recently we had our Experience the Outdoors Day; this is a really great event held at Horsethief Lake campground. ETO day is held in conjunction with many other partners; SD GF&P, Concessionaire FRM, and the National Park Service and others. It's an opportunity for adults with special needs to get out and experience the outdoors; Alice you were there, it was a great event. It was really neat to hear how excited they were to catch their first fish. This is a great thing for these people. This is something we do to reach out to that segment of the population and introduce them to opportunities in the outdoors.

Cook Lake

Van Every: Cook Lake, Wyoming is very interested in this. As a result of the monitoring, etc., we were able to open the site for day use, and some of the area was opened for overnight camping. We are still monitoring that so that if it starts moving, etc., we can get people out of there safely. We are working closely with a number of other Agencies, and we are really thankful that we could get it back open and available to the public; we have to make sure we can do it safely.

Lastly, I want to mention the name change of Harney Peak to Black Elk Peak. That was done through the Geographic Naming Board. We are in the process of changing that name on brochures. At this time we do not have plans to change the names of trails or other features. The lookout itself has been registered with National Register of Historic Places, and you cannot change the name once it's been placed on the Register; so it will stay Harney Peak Look Out. And the other features, we are open to suggestions and comments but at this time we'll stay with the names as they currently are.

Brown: Thank you. At this time, we'll turn it over to Josh Van Vlack; Josh representing the State of Wyoming, you currently have, as a part of the Working Group, a Grand Canyon of the Black Hills Legacy Project; would you please give us the background on that competitive grant program.

Van Vlack: State of Wyoming in cooperation with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and the Nature Conservancy is putting in an application to acquire approximately 5,000 acres of Moskee Land Company South of Ranch A in the Grand Canyon country. The goal is to maintain it as a working forest rather than subdividing; this will increase sportsman and recreational

opportunities to that west slope of the National Forest. Craig Bobzien put in a letter of support as the Forest Supervisor; if we are funded, we are requesting \$7 million toward the purchase. 25% of the funding would be coming from the State of Wyoming and other partners. We are early in the process, we won't find out if we're funded at the national level till January or February 2017. I'm happy to answer questions.

Brown: thank you; if you want additional information; on this grant, please visit with Josh and he will help you out.

It's now 2:00 p.m. and we'll take a 10 minute break.

Regular Agenda

Rushmore Connector Trail Update ~ Kelly Honors

Brown: The first item is the Rushmore Trail Connector update.

Krueger: There are enough new folks here that might not be aware of what is going on with this. We are responding to a request from the State of South Dakota to establish a new trail, somewhere upwards of 17 miles, that would connect Mount Rushmore to Hill City. Kelly Honors is our Acting Ed Fischer, our Environmental Coordinator who retired in May. Kelly has stepped in to lead this effort.

Honors: Good afternoon everyone, as Jerry just mentioned, I just recently took over this project; it is fairly new to me. I do have copies of the map which I will send around. As Jerry mentioned the Forest Service is in the process of responding to the application from the State of South Dakota for a new trail.

We have a memorandum of understanding with the State, and one with Mount Rushmore (Bruce Weisman is here representing Mount Rushmore). A third party contractor, HDR, has been selected to do the NEPA. The Forest Service is the lead, our cooperators are Mount Rushmore and Federal Highways. HDR had a recent change in the lead of their contract; Pam McWarder is the new lead. I would like to go over the trail location; as Jerry mentioned the purpose is to connect Mt. Rushmore to Hill City.

[Review of Map]

Connected actions included with the project:

- Potential new campground on the north side of Norbeck
- Reconstruction of underpass by Willow Creek (three crossings of Hwy 244)
- Require right of way acquisition over private land at KOA
- Reconstruct portions of the Centennial Trail
- Look at addition trail heads if needed
- Consider use fees and fees kiosks if needed

Public scoping started June 7th. It was a 30 day comment period. We are still getting comments in; we have 56 written comments, some came through mail, public data base or from public meetings. We are working with contractor and Mount Rushmore, to go through the comments and determine what the issues are and what the concerns are. Two public meetings held in June, one in Hill City and one in Rapid City.

General types of comments we've been receiving: Some general support, concern of the overlapping uses, ATV/Wrinkle Rock climbing area/Horsethief/range permittees/Norbeck. Concern about access to the trail and campgrounds. Concern about parking and trail heads. Concerns about the impacts to scenic byway, to wildlife, wilderness, Concerns from adjoining private landowners. DOT has mentioned some safety concerns, one about one of the crossings; which we are looking into.

Time Line: Draft EIS is expected on November of 2017, 40 day comment period, then there will be the final EIS, which our timeline says March of 2018, then we'll put out a draft decision and objection period then the FS will make a decision. Mt. Rushmore has a different process but it will occur after our decision.

Brown: Any questions for Kelly? We are in the middle of the two year EIS process followed up by a 16 month independent follow-up process. When there is a new park assessment, the important thing is there is an open process for public input; the HDR has a website where you can find a brochure on the process. The SD GF&P is a primary player, the Forest Services and the National Park Service. Part of the EIS dollars came through Mt. Rushmore Memorial Society, and the South Dakota Parks and Recreation Foundation. This gives lots of opportunities for input. Katie (Ceroll) do you have any comments?

WEB SITE: www.rushmoreconnectortrail.com

Ceroll: Thank you for the update Kelly, welcome to the project, we will be giving a similar presentation to the G&F commission in October.

Burns: Do you know the percentage or miles from Wrinkle Rock to Norbeck? How much is new construction?

Honors: I don't have the exact number of miles.

Brown: The overall trail is around 15 miles and it depends on the loop.

Burns: It looks like a lot of it is on existing trails or roads.

Honors: Some of the roads are not system roads, they were maybe logging roads or temp roads.

Tokarczyk: On the website it says that there is a special use permit required for this; what would determine if a Forest Plan amendment is needed?

Honors: Thank you for asking that. There are several Forest Plan amendments that could be required; three standards deal with the Norbeck Wildlife Preserve:

- Do not expand the recreational trail system; relocate trail segments to correct or prevent environmental damage.
- Authorized land occupancy's only if they are compatible with wildlife needs.
- Do not expand existing permits or allow new outfitter guides permits for any activities.
- The fourth deals with the Black Elk Wilderness that says the max party size should be 25.

Brown: Any other questions? Kelly, thank you very much for the report. The next item on the agenda is the Spearfish Canyon/Bismarck Lake land exchange proposal.

Proposed Land Exchange – Spearfish Canyon/Bismarck Lake ~ Mark Van Every

Van Every: Thank you Dick. One other thing on the Mount Rushmore Connector that I would like to mention is that the terrain will be steeper than the Mickleson trail – it's not a railroad grade. This is one of the issues we are working through. We also have questions about routing a bicycle trail through a campground and safety issues. Also the feasibility of the trail segment in the park, literally along the road is another challenge. There are a number of questions that we need to look at when we develop the alternatives for this project.

Switching to the land exchange. There was legislation introduced in both the Senate and the House, the hearing is scheduled for 9:30 in the morning. When we're dealing with legislation that's been introduced, the only person that takes a position on the legislation is the President. There are a number of questions and concerns from the Forest Service, but after tomorrow, we will have the official position of the Executive Branch of the Government; and we'll work through that process.

Some of the questions we have are about the equalization of the value between the parcels we would trade; being Spearfish Canyon and Bismarck Lake and the parcels being offered up for exchange and the appraisal process. Usually its equal value for equal value; and this is an important part as we look out for the best interest of the American people. Also, there have been substantial investments made in those facilities already by the Forest Service; and what is the disposition of those investments. We'll see where the process takes us.

Brown: Any questions? Katie do you have any comments?

Ceroll: The caveat today is that when I'm new, please jump in to correct me if need be. We are proposing a land exchange; the transfer area is roughly 1468.4 acres, the goal would be to have a State Park on a rim to rim concept. Some areas we are already working on, the Falls Viewing area, Roughlock Falls Area. It goes to hearing tomorrow; I'm sure you've all seen the bill in proper form.

Brown: The Governor's State of the State message in January shows the maps; and you can get these materials on the Governor's website at Governoroffice.com. You can also find other materials about what the State is doing and land that they already own.

Allen: Why does the State want to do this; we haven't had the opportunity to see the Governor's presentation. Just a quick overview.

Ceroll: The rim to rim State Park concept would enable us to have connectivity there. We could have a trail system from savoy fishing ponds to the viewing area. The State Park believes in a balance of recreation and management/conservation.

Allen: I assume that's the same rationale for Bismarck Lake?

Ceroll: The Bismarck Lake facility is so close to the Custer Park area that people don't even know when they leave the park. This gives us the ability to create a better customer experience and many times they use the facilities in Custer State Park, so the ability to provide a better customer service as an extension of Custer Park with that trade.

Patty Brown: Concerned public would like to know about that rim to rim area in Spearfish Canyon are you including the scenic drive and will that continue to be free or will it be a fee area as well as the Falls?

Ceroll: There will not be a charge to drive the Scenic Byway; the Governor has stated that. The rest of the state park concept; our philosophy is that our parks need to be self-sustaining. We are working on a master plan to look at what is needed for amenities. So we'll look at if there is a need to pay. There will not be a fee to drive the scenic byway.

Brown: For those who may not be aware, if you have a State Park sticker, it allows you free access to all state parks in South Dakota. Individual parks do not have their own fee. \$30.00 for the state allows access annually.

Ceroll: Right, thank you; there is a State Park annual sticker and that allows access to all of the State Parks in South Dakota. This is what I was speaking about the self-sufficient philosophy of the Park.

Patty Brown: So will there be a day use fee, maybe a smaller fee than having to buy the yearly sticker?

Ceroll: I feel very inadequate to answer that question here today. The public input is so vitally important and that is why we are entering into the master planning phase at this time and I do not want to get ahead of that here today.

Brown: The purpose today was for everyone to get a general understanding of what is being proposed. Any number of questions that might be addressed during public comment.

Rahn: What is the dollar value of the land to be exchanged?

Van Every: We don't know the answer yet, but that is the purpose of the appraisal process; and that appraisal would look at the value of the lands that are being offered for exchange. In the Legislation what is being proposed is a process that is a different; it would be valued based on Agriculture value, normally we look at highest and best use value of properties. The connectivity issue is another thing that will be a good point for discussion. I think there is a good opportunity to create that connectivity between State Park lands and Forest Service land as they already exist just as we currently do as with the Mickleson Trail. Good questions for discussion.

Whalen: Will there be an opportunity for the public to comment?

Haugen: This is the process; the Senator had a column on it, the Governor has been very vocal about it; it's not like a NEPA process or anything. This will be the committee vote, then to the Senate, then the individual plan is the States; they came to us asking for us to help make it happen. The Senator liked the plan the Governor had. Regarding the dollar amount, there are different ways of transferring land, the Forest Service may have their preference but that may not be the way it will be. The FS has acquired 1.5 million acres of land, 16,000 in the black hills, so that was acquired land, the Forest Service didn't give away land.

Bekaert: We have this on the Senator's web sites, we encourage you to submit your comments to Senator Rounds. Your concerns mean a lot to the Senator.

Otten: There was something else in the bill about the value of the land once it was found; if it was unequal, the State had the opportunity to pay a cash balance or find more land to exchange.

Brown: Scott Jacobson sent a copy of the legislation to everyone. Hopefully you know more now than you did before; and as we track this we'll learn more.

Burns: Is this something that the Board may be asked to comment on or not?

Van Every: It's a Legislative process, so that's the opportunity to be involved, so if Congress and the President agree to move forward with the exchange, we'll move forward and follow the direction, so your best avenue for input is through your elected representatives.

David Miller: The question is Road 222 up through Roughlock Falls; how would it affect that? The other is that it's easy to get land values in the Canyon, any realtor can tell you that; Ag land would be a joke.

Allen: My questions is for Mark. The Forest Service has the authority to proceed with land exchanges that go through the NEPA process so that everyone can comment and share opinions. Why does the Senator think that it's better to go through a process that dodges the NEPA process?

Brown: I'd like to keep Mark from trying to answer a question about why the Senator is acting one way or another. This might not be something we want to address here at this meeting. I understand what you are asking.

Haugen: Any land exchange takes congressional action. Looking at the wilderness designation that Senator Johnson was looking at was a Congressional action, not a NEPA process; when the Forest Service enters into their own agreement, they go through the NEPA process.

Brown: The role of the Advisory Board is for us to understand what the proposal is about; such as the mountain bike issue; so we want a better understanding of what is being proposed. Any other questions?

Whalen: Crook County has worked with some land exchanges in the Black Hills, and we understood that the Forest really wanted to get rid of inholdings to make the Forest all one piece as much as possible; I don't know why the Forest Service would allow these pockets of Forest Service land to be taken out of the whole picture for land that isn't even in the vicinity. So I questions why the FS is going this direction.

Van Every: The FS is not proposing this, the State is, the Senators and Congressman and we are working through the Legislative process. Typically you are correct, we would not exchange for lands that would result in isolated parcels. To Alice's question, normally exchanges are between two willing partners; and we have to look at, is what we are giving up equal to what we are acquiring; is it in the public interest. It does have oversite to ensure that the public is getting a fair deal for the land they are giving up. But typically it is not a Legislative process like what is going on in this case.

Brown: Thank you for that input. With that, I want to turn this back over to Mark to move into the next topic.

Teckla – Osage 230 kV Transmission Project Update ~ Ruth Esperance

Esperance: I've been asked to give an update on a project called the Teckla Osage to Rapid City transmission line; the project came to us in 2009. The proposal is driven by the need to provide safe and reliable power to communities and BHP customers, across two states, multiple federal agencies, and private property.

This project was initially proposed to the agency in 2009 and involved multi state and multi-jurisdictional entities throughout the entire 144 mile length, approximately 40 miles crosses the Black Hills National Forest.

Key dates:

Initiation of NEPA process (public scoping): Fall, 2011

Final EIS and ROD signed: May 15, 2015

Special Use Permit and operating plan signed: July 7, 2016

Settlement Sale August, 2016:

Logging operations began on the Wyoming/South Dakota line in late July, 2016.

Baker Timber is the subcontractor for Black Hills Power (BHP).

Operations are progressing well, currently in the area of McVey road and Deerfield Road, West of Hill City.

Construction of the pads and digging of the holes to house the poles is occurring behind the logging operation. Pad development started on the Wyoming/South Dakota line and is currently at NFSR 294 or pole structure 707.

Installation of poles is now occurring on the Wyoming and South Dakota line.

Poles are being hauled from the pole storage yard located on Deerfield Cove Road.

Projected to be operational in 2017.

Patty Brown: Will some of these powerlines replace the existing powerlines?

Esperance: Yes part of it is a replacement.

Brown: Thank you Ruth. Are there any other questions for Ruth? If not, the next topic is the BHRL update, I'll turn this over to Mark for introductions.

Black Hills Resilient Landscapes Project Update ~ Rhonda O'Byrne

Van Every: Rhonda is the District Ranger in Spearfish and is leading the analysis for what we call BHRL, Black Hills Resilient Landscapes Project. We are looking at what the next steps are following the Mountain Pine Beetle Response project and for going into the future.

O'Byrne: We currently are in the public scoping period. This ends this Friday and thus far we have received less than 10 comment letters. We usually get a rush right at the end for comments. Most of the comments have been favorable regarding the project. We do get letters from some organizations that do not want projects to occur on the National Forest. Once we collect all of the comment letters, we will analyze them and look at types, groups and if there are any significant comments. We will determine if we need to develop any alternatives or modify the proposed action. After that, we will continue working with the working group and come up with some recommendations to give and present to the board on any further direction or advice that you may have for the Forest on how we move forward. If there are no questions, I'd like to defer the rest of my time to Mr. Brenneisen and the working group. They do have a proposed letter to the Forest and a copy has been passed around.

Brown: Are there any questions for Rhonda? Without objection, I'd like to move up on the agenda to the Forest health working group update.

Forest Health Working Group Update ~ Dave Mertz, Dave Brenneisen, Nancy Trautman, John Gomez, Mary Zimmerman

Brenneisen: – My apologies for everybody just getting this letter. We had the intention of getting it in front of you a few days ago. There is a lot in the letter, and I'll go over some of the high points. We would like the Forest Service to make use of the extensive research that's been done concerning forest health and the Black Hills. We want to remind the Forest Service what the aim of HFRA is and that is to reduce the risk or extent of/or increase the resilience to insect or disease infestations in the areas requested by the governors in SD and WY. That area requested by the governors and designated by the secretary, basically covers the entire Black Hills National Forest. We want to remind the Forest Service that although moving towards Forest plan objections for structural stage percentages may be achieved as part of this project, it should not be as an HFRA project and it should not be one of the primary goals. We talk about continuing to do thinning in 4B stands, those with moderate density/mature timber stands. The Forest is proposing to do a lot of work in hard wood stands; oak aspen, and birch stands and we agree that is a good goal but we feel that they should go further than what they are proposing to do. We would like to see increased use of uneven age management and see some large tree retention. We are supporting the increased use of prescribed fire. We urge agency to look at structural stage 5 (old growth) and come up with a long term strategy for stands that are in excess

of 160 years old. We can't keep working towards establishing those stands and then allow the bugs to tear them up. We need a long term strategy so that we are not having to replace those stands on a regular basis. We are encouraging the agency to continue to listen to specialists and promote ecosystem diversity, paying particular attention to non-native invasives. We are suggesting that along with maximum acreage goals that are stated in the purpose and need, that the agency consider including some minimums. We'd like the agency to consider climate change and identify bench marks of success and conduct monitoring post implementation on progress that's being made. Can we give the board a little time to read through this on their own? I'd like to get some input from the rest of the board. The group met and we had some back and forth to put this together. In the end, the working group cannot provide input to the agency, the board provides input to the agency.

Brown: Thank you Dave for the background and suggestion. To make sure we are understanding, the letter you presented is a recommendation to the Forest advisory board (us) on behalf of the forest health working group. You'd like this recommendation, with observations and comments, to be included in a letter and if approved by the board, would then be sent on behalf of the board, to the Forest Supervisor for his review. If that is the understanding, I think that is a direction we can go. But before we get to that or a motion in this regard, if we can have members of the forest health working group give us any other comments or observations they have.

Gomez: The Forest health working group: Mary Zimmerman, Dave Brenneisen, Nancy Trautman, and myself, met with Rhonda back in June and we think this project is very important. It will cover things that will govern the forest for the next 10 years. After reading the proposal, we put this letter together. We would like to have the board look at this and consider submitting a comment. If we can build consensus, I'd like to propose that we make that recommendation.

Brown: We can proceed in a number of different ways. One being, we can take some time for members of the board to review or we could make a motion. Are there any questions for the working group before we consider a motion? There is a public comment period that ends Friday and this letter would be part of the public scoping record. Part of the contemplation would be, if this passes or moves forward, we are urging the Forest Supervisor to respond to this.

Brenneisen: This letter would be submitted as a comment letter. As part of HFRA, the agency is required to collaborate with a partner group and for the purpose of BHRL, the National Forest Advisory Board is that collaborative group. To me, the real world definition of collaboration is working together so while we will be submitting a comment letter, the group will work with the agency in a collaborative effort as we proceed through the project.

Brown: Are there any questions? Would we like to seek a motion?

Burns: Would it be possible to have a document that explains structural stages with photos and explains what the Forest goals are?

Krueger: Rhonda has a really good document with that information that we can get to you.

Brenneisen: That document was also in the NFAB field trip folders.

Van Every: Our scoping periods for public comment are not the same when it comes to collaboration with a group. It is possible to go outside of those timeframes and continue that dialogue. It is important for us to get the best input you can provide on this and other projects. And technically speaking, we can take public comments outside of that timeframe as well up to the decision but there are certain legal requirements as far as timeframes if people are going to later challenge a project, they have to have gotten their comments in. If NFAB is planning to object to the project, then you may want to get your comments in before that. If not, then there is no reason why you can't continue to work on this for longer, but the sooner you get it in, the better so that we can move through the process.

Brown: Is there anything in this letter that needs to be changed relative to your question, Bob? Is there a suggestion that the working group needs to make in the letter to move forward?

Burns: I know that there are goals that the Forest has to fit in a certain percentage in each category, and I'm not sure it says in here where we are right now.

Krueger: There is a bar chart graphic in the document Rhonda put together.

Brown: Is there anything in the letter that needs to be changed to accommodate your observations?

Wiebers: For the most part, I agree with everything that is on here. It gets a little prescriptive on number 2 and the sub-portions of it and I'm a little concerned without having more time, to really say that is how we feel and that is how we want to move forward. If we do have some more time and we can work through this more collaboratively, I'd appreciate the time to review.

Van Every: Rhonda, from a time-frame standpoint, what would be most helpful for you to get this from the group?

O'Byrne: We are trying to get to a point where we are analyzing any alternatives by November/December/January. If we need to develop any alternatives, we need to know that to have time to create those by November. I would probably look at the letter knowing that it is not official, but use it to look at topics and potential concerns. If you have the letter in by the October meeting, that would be good. The biggest thing at this point in this process is, if there is something in the proposal that you think really needs to be tweaked or changed, that's the most important thing to get in right now. When we have those comments, we can look at concerns and re-engage the working group to see if they have thoughts and ideas on how to address those.

Brown: To make this efficient and effective, Danielle do you think those suggestions will work or do we need to have a process that we can clearly follow for those that want to have some input? Dave, John and those on the committee, will you use this letter as a motion? Can we get suggestions to Dave, John or Rhonda? The working group may or may not respond, but then we can come back and look at the suggestions and how to incorporate them. We need to have a timetable and identify to who we should respond.

Brenneisen: I'm all in favor of the full board getting as good a look at this as possible. Our apologies for not getting this to everyone sooner. It's going to need to be approved by the board at a meeting and the next opportunity is next month's meeting.

Gomez: Send the group your comments and together we can come up with a language.

Brown: Scott if you can communicate this out to the board, including members that are not here, that we need your changes into Rhonda, no later than September 28. She will work with the working group, then we will ask the full board to approve the recommendations to give to the Forest Supervisor.

Van Every: Rather than sending them to Rhonda, it would be my preference that those go directly to the working group so Rhonda is not in the middle.

Brown: Dave or John, who would like to receive the recommendations?

Gomez: You can send them to me.

Brown: Please send suggestions or recommendations to John Gomez by September 28.

Hague: Does your draft deviate from what they are already doing?

O'Byrne: I don't think there are comments that are leading towards something very different from what we are proposing. They are pretty minor. One question we've had is not necessarily related to this project, but more about what we are doing today before we implement the project.

Gomez: The Forest Service gave us some management activities related to hardwoods and others for maximums. What we are proposing is that we establish some minimums.

Brown: Today is September 21 and by September 28, please get comments and observations to John Gomez to be shared with the working group. The working group will either put them in the letter or not and will recommend to the overall board what they came up with. We will either pass it or not and amend it at the next meeting.

O'Byrne: I believe the board was sent a copy of the full 10 page proposed action that has photos and descriptions and will help aid with the process. It is also posted on the Forest website. Also, I have an introduction to make, this is Karen Hartman, the new Northern Hills Deputy District Ranger.

Patty Brown: I didn't get the document that Rhonda sent.

Krueger: Let's please re-send that document to the board.

Brenneisen: – I think the e-mail with the draft letter may have just gone out to the board this morning. Please check your e-mail, it might be helpful if you could send the link to the site that has the request for comments, maps, and other as well.

Brown: I would ask that the working group provide us a suggested motion which says "the attached letter is approved by advisory group" at the next meeting.

BHNF Timber Program Update (FY 16) ~ Dave Mertz

Brown: We will continue with the Black Hills National Forest timber program update.

Van Every: We wanted to give you an update on where we finished out the year with the timber program and some things we are looking at going forward. Dave will share some statistics.

Mertz: My name is Dave Mertz and I'm the Natural Resource Staff Officer on the Forest. The timber program was busy and challenging this year. I've given you updates before on the budget process and how that can be challenging. We start out with an initial budget and a target associated with that. It is often low and we have to prioritize with where and how we will use the budget. Then we get a final budget and where we ended up with the final budget was 207,000 ccf total for the timber program which was our target. We did get additional funding of \$10.6 million dollars. We put a lot of hard work into the program. Some of the sales came in toward the end of the fiscal year and we had to scramble to sell them. We sold our final sale on Monday, which exceeded our target. With that sale we are at 213,600 ccf. We accomplished that through several things we did. Really a big part of that is with some of these sales, we start out with estimates and the work turns out to be more volume than what we thought. We have been on a role for a number of years exceeding our target and that is a big accomplishment. We are working on 2017 right now and where we will be going with that. There are some usual difficulties and right now we have the initial budget and are working on plans for the future.

Brenneisen: Are the 2017 team targets meaningful or too preliminary? Do you have an initial target or feel if there will be additional funding?

Mertz: We do have an initial target associated with the initial budgets. We are starting off with a lower budget than 2016 and lower target of 130,000 ccf. We have been told by the regional office that they expect additional funding. We had a multi-year program and the goal was around 202,000 ccf for FY17. They have told us to expect something in that range and we are trusting that the money is going to come.

Van Vlack: What is the product breakdown on the 213,000 ccf from last year?

Mertz: 201,000 ccf was from saw timber and the remainder was pole and other miscellaneous projects.

Brown: Are we talking fiscal year when you mention 2017 as opposed to the calendar year?

Mertz: Yes, the calendar year is different than the fiscal year.

Tokarczyk: Could you explain ccf?

Mertz: Ccf is the measurement we use in the timber program which is 100 cubic feet. Maybe you are familiar with board feet? Years ago, the Forest Service started using ccf. If you have 100 million board feet = approximately 200,000 ccf. A logging truck equals about 8 ccf and Neiman's loads 120-150 truckloads per day.

Brown: Are there any other questions?

Van Every: As most of you know, there has been a lot of changes to the timber resources and the biggest thing has been mountain pine beetle. In addition to dead and harvested trees, we've had a number of large fires. We need to understand what is still out there and we've embarked on a process to do a forest inventory and analysis. It is a process used across the country, not only on National Forests, but private lands as well, that gives an inventory of the standing trees that are out there. It is a systematic and statistically valid sampling process. We are asking them to accelerate that process for the Black Hills to give us a better picture and more statistics. We are working through the process and hopefully we will begin that next summer. They were trying to do it in two years and my goal is to get that answer in about a year. If they are not able to do that, we are going to look at alternative ways of getting information. One of which is a technology where they use laser type aerial imagery that allows you to measure height and density of trees to extrapolate from the visual image what is out there on the ground. We are trying to look at the FIA process and if that doesn't work, we are looking at a combination of other remote sensing technology. We discussed that with Dave's former cohorts and we are going to be working together through that process to hopefully have a better picture of what's there today vs. 10 years ago.

Brown: Our next topic is the Recreation Facilities Working Group Update.

Recreation Facilities Working Group Update ~ Anne Apodaca, Dick Brown, Alice Allen, Linda Tokarczyk, Lon Carrier

Van Every: Annie Apodaca is the Forest Recreation Program Manager. I will tell you from the last few meetings, the Forest recreation team has been busy with the recreation season and probably are not as far along as we'd like or you might like us to be.

Apodaca: The last time I was here to talk about this process, I said "we will be in touch soon." Well, we will be in touch soon. We are waiting on a conference from the regional office and the contractor who was working with us on the process. We found out that the data was a little skewed and we need to look at our data again. The regional office is scheduled to come in October and hopefully we can move on in November. I'll be in touch with the working group at that time.

Krueger: Why it is important to take a pause and another look at that data, is it is critical to the work that this committee is involved in. If we were to move forward, our data would be faulty. So we are hitting the pause button and working with the regional experts to work on the numbers to find out how they are currently skewed. We are working to find out what the correction is that we need to initiate to make those numbers valid. Then when we have the valid numbers, we can move forward and engage with the working group.

Tieszen: What kind of numbers are you referencing? Can you give an example?

Apodaca: There is a lot of data that goes into this process and a contractor came up with the formula. Data includes: maintenance costs, visits to site/week, does the site have a concessionaire and several other items. The data that was input was inconsistent and we need to make sure that everybody is doing the data entry the same way. Recreation happens during the summer and our team has been really busy with that. The regional office is coming in October and once that happens, it shouldn't be a long process and we will get started again this fall.

Van Every: Is everyone familiar with the process and what the purpose is?

NFAB: Yes

Krueger: For those that were on the field trip, the process for how the analysis and scoring was done was explained. There are 4 different districts, working on 140 sites and the process becomes more complex.

Brown: What was it that skewed the numbers? Was it the input, programming, social factors, or numeric? When we get the final analysis that the team comes up with, with the regional office, we need to know that the data put in is consistent and is factual. The group has been involved, looked at the data sheets and visited sites on our own. We are moving in the right direction and waiting for results.

Tokarczyk: It would be helpful to me if you could clarify the expectations. It seems like the process has changed a little bit. I looked at it more as we would be advising on the process vs. the actual output.

Apodaca: The process was developed by a contractor that is working with us. My understanding is you would help us once we have the data and once we have our prioritization, to look at that and make sure we are on the right track.

Kruger: Yes, once we have the right data, the sub-committee will help us with the interpretation of that information.

Apodaca: The data will prioritize the sites and then we have the option to look at that and make sure that that's the way we want it.

Brown: I would think this is similar to what we received today from the forest health working group. We will look at the suggested conclusions from the Forest and we will make observations back to this board. The more we know about what you are doing in the process, the more it can help us make recommendations. Our job as a working group is to come in and say, this is our assessment of the process and this is why we think this works. And if you are seeking an endorsement or if it fits or doesn't fit, we need a reliable base as this is more than just numbers.

Tokarczyk: It would be helpful to start from the beginning and show us this is where we were at and this is where we are now. It's been a little sketchy so far for us waiting on that process.

Carrier: I agree with Linda. If we can piggy back from where we were since this has been such a lengthy process that would be helpful.

Brown: Any other observations or questions? We will move onto the non-motorized trails/over snow working group update

Non-Motorized Trails/Over Snow Working Group Update ~ Ruth Esperance, Bob Burns, Dave Hague, and Mary Zimmerman

Van Every: We've received a number of questions on trails projects.

1. How are we doing taking care of what we already have; if the ones we have aren't being taken care of and causing resource damage, that needs to be our main priority before we add anymore. If we have met that objective, how are we going to take care of new trails in a sustainable way? We have to be able to take care of new trails in the future.
2. We have to be able to work through obstacles or barriers there might be for a trail proposal. Is it a viable route and is it sustainable? Does it have barriers such as private land, cultural resources, threatened and endangered species or other? Usually I'll tackle the obstacle first and then go into the details.
3. If someone comes in with a proposal what are the things we want them to answer in determining if it's a viable project?

Burns: When our group met, Dave, Mary, Patty Brown, Tony Ortiz, and Ruth and Annie, the impression I had was to come up with guidelines that if you want a trail, this is a process. We came up with a document that listed all the things you could go through as you build a trail. At our second meeting, we were going to go through that process, and we only got through the first sentence before we had too big of a conversation. There are several questions that aren't answered in a one page document. What is our group tasked with and what is the ask? That is something we came back with, for either the Forest Service or Board to come up with and give us some direction. Ruth had interesting maps at the last meeting showing existing trails. We're the forest advisory board; we're not here to advise the public, so how can we help the Forest Service give the public direction? If someone comes in with a trail idea, right out their back door, if they have money, and they'll maintain it, it still may not work with the Forest Plan. Ruth has a presentation on this subject. Other members please chime in.

Esperance: If you recall back at our May and June meetings, we were talking on this subject pertaining to mountain bikes, then it morphed to motorized. In May and June, we started referring to the spaghetti map. Now I'll introduce you to the fruit bowl map. This about gathering basic foundational information. This map shows the entire Black Hills area, so it shows motorized and non-motorized trails that are not just on the Forest, but also Custer State Park, Jewel Cave, etc. As you can see, it takes up quite a bit of the National Forest area. The fruit bowl example shows different experiences and how do we compare apples to oranges? An example being, how do we compare Patty and her motorcycle to Tony and his mountain bike? A good trail day for motorcycle is 75 miles, a mountain bike is 25 miles, and hiking is 10 miles. Now we can change the fruit bowl to something comparable, where we can compare apples and oranges, and task out some actions that can help us with the ask from May and June. We also had the field trip around those two subjects (motorized and non-motorized). The trails group will help us to take all of the miles on the map, and break them out into categories. So that we can see what is a motorcycle trail compared to a mountain bike trail. We are wrestling a little bit with the ask, but maybe it can fit it with some addition work that helps us get to the end point of how do we add ecological and financially sustainable trails and where do we add them.

Allen: Do we have a handout of that map?

Esperance: The map is still a draft.

Brown: What's a level 1 road?

Esperance: Level 1 is closed to the public. We use it for management of the National Forest such as timber sales. An example of a Level 1 road is the stratus bowl road. It is highly popular for hiking or walking.

Burns: On the field trip, two examples that were inappropriate, the jump that ended up on top of a pile of logs and a steep route coming down a road that ended in a tree. There are issues in user created trails. There has to be Forest Service specifications, even temporary trails as they tend to become permanent trails. Are we going in the direction of motorized travel, where we had a big plan where things were outlawed, mud bogs, hill climbs, etc? In the long run, our discussion was what is our task?

Brenneisen: Level 1 roads are used for administrative purposes but closed to the public. Do you mean closed to motorized use by the public, because all roads are open to hiking, correct? They are open to hiking and biking, but sometimes if they want to bike it takes a little bit of clearing.

Esperance: Correct.

Whalen: We listened to the mountain bike groups and they want new trails and the answer has pretty much been no. Is there an option for trails that people don't use anymore? Maybe say we will have X number of trails in the Black Hills and no new trails will be built until some of the abandoned trails have been reclaimed.

Esperance: I would say that is part of this collective effort. That's where we go back to this fruit bowl example of, are we equal in offering the experiences? I could see where we could go through what with did with motor vehicles and the travel management rule and if we add or change it would go through a NEPA process.

Brown: Considering the process and the things you are thinking about, knowing trails are one thing, you have an issue of equity use, priority use, and in making the analogy of is it an apple or an orange? It is different than in the compatible use. When I'm out as an archer waiting for the deer to come in, the last thing I want is for someone to come in with a musket loader shooting. When you add in the qualitative factors, how do we find compatible use? A good day for me when I'm out with my bow is to not see anyone else or hear anyone else.

Krueger: Another example are fat tire bikers that want to use the snowmobile trail.

Brown: Are there any other questions?

Hague: Part of what gets missed is you have 400 miles of hiking trails, but do you know how many people are using them? In the motorized world, it's the explosion of UTVs. Things are changing, we have to factor that into it, don't we?

Esperance: We talked a lot about that at the last meeting. The need to get the miles of experience and map that out to answer that question. We talked about trail standards when we design a trail. If it is designed for a mountain bike, it doesn't preclude me from hiking on it. It's balancing that as well, you have other uses allowed and how do we compare that. It's not an easy endeavor and how do you find some kind of balance?

Ortiz: I'm also a part of Black Hills Trails out of Sturgis. We are not a mountain bike group, we are a trails group and we have a trail proposal in. We've done a lot of work on the BLM, and as a group, our concern is Dave's concern. We are raising money to purchase cameras, to see who is on a trail and what they are using it for. It is great to be involved in building a trail and then getting to use it. We are running into all kinds of trail users and that is the kind of data we are looking to gather for the public so we can see the trail use. The BLM has trail counters as well, but they don't distinguish a biker from a runner, but they do get a number.

Burns: Dave you have an interesting app on your phone where you can GPS where you are. It posts on a website and shows the hotspots of where people are using. That could be an interesting tool.

Ortiz: There are several different apps out there, like strava.com that brings up the Black Hills. The popular trails are brighter than the less popular trails. It shows road bikers, so you might be looking at a road or a highway. This morning was the start of the Black Hills expedition which is 430 mile mountain bike course. I have the map on my phone (bhexpedition.com) and I've been tracking the riders. It is interesting how they are using the entire Black Hills. We have a unique opportunity as trail users, as mountain bikers and others, we live in an area that you can do a 430 mile mountain bike ride if you want to, and how many other areas in the country are there where you can do that? There are 2-4 that I can think of, so we have a nice resource here.

Burns: I noticed on your app that the real hotspots are around Rapid City, Spearfish, and Sturgis. That could govern where we put trails. Maybe there is more of a need in those areas than the outlying areas. Do you obliterate trails to add new trails? It's a very difficult question because any trail will be someone's favorite.

Brown: Do members of the board have any questions?

Burns: We are going to have another meeting next week and any direction we get before then would be good, but we'll continue our discussions. Maybe we'll have a more definitive ask to come back with.

Brown: It's clear that for the working group, the biggest challenge is, what is the actual use? You can only do that by monitoring and you only have so many monitors. When we were looking at some of the recreation sites, they were very nice and beautiful, but how many people come into to use those areas? This is where programing can be a problem if we don't have a common base.

Patty Brown: As we talk about use, recognize that our motorized trail system is still in its infancy and we're still opening Record of Decision trails that were given to us six years ago. Some trails may not be used because they aren't connected. Remember our motorized trail system is still getting open and that it is a process.

Tieszen: As stated, we have a tremendous opportunity in the Black Hills because the Black Hills are so accessible. Visitors say all the time how wonderful it is and how accessible it is. We do have a tremendous opportunity and we just have to figure out how to address it and regulate it. At the end of the day it's a good problem to have.

Burns: When we talk about capacity of the Forest, are we talking about the capacity for this many acres or square miles to handle trails or are we talking budgetary capacity? Is our area big enough to handle more trails if we have more funding?

Krueger: One of the things missing is quality. It's about the quality of the experience.

Burns: We talked about the steep trails and jumps that are dangerous. I understand that Terry Peak at one point, had accommodated that need, but aren't doing it now. I understand other ski areas and other areas do that and maybe that's something we should encourage for people who want that experience. It might not be on the National Forest, but it could still be available to them in the Black Hills.

Ortiz: I started mountain biking three years ago and I learned that this is one of the top ten places in the world for quality of trails. I've talked to mountain bikers across the country and they all agree that we have a good quality product.

Public comment

Brown: We would like to open the meeting up to comments from members of the public.

Brent Kurtzman: Thank you for the opportunity. I'm with Black Hills Mountain Bike Association (BH MBA), past President and current trail coordinator. We feel like we have been run over by a bus because we keep getting branded as mountain bikers. We advocate about 99.9% percent of shared use with non-motorized, but we also advocate for shared use with motorized users. We all have similar needs. We all need sustainable trails. Mountain biking gets a bad rap. Not all of us our adrenaline junkies who want to drop off cliffs or go down hills at a high speed. When I read the construction and maintenance manual that the agency has, they adopted the international mountain bike association standards for all trail construction within the Forest because they are sustainable. The trails that BH MBA and Black Hills Trails have built are to those specifications. We have a resource and we have the ability to interconnect communities and have a really viable 9 month season here where we are filling restaurants in our shoulder seasons and enhancing other tourism. Why are we asking for the same things now that my predecessors were asking for 20 years ago? Which is a handful of little trails that are on the map already, that interconnect. Every community should be able to jump on a single track trail and get out into the Forest.

Burns: On our field trip, the question came up, would it be appropriate to have stickers for mountain bikes to help pay for improvements?

Kurtzman: I have a hard time getting my head around the concept of a motorized user fee when there is not a non-motorized fee. Look at what the state has done with the Mickleson trail and how the State is under special use permit to run the snowmobile trail program. That program already exists and we just need to figure out how to do it. From my perspective, instead of individual bikes, each user has a card. It's got to be a fair environment in order for that to work. Why hasn't there been a lawsuit on the national level?

Brown: Are there any other comments from members of the public?

Ben Wudtke: I have three comments. First congrats to Forest for exceeding the timber target. That is no feat. Second, looking through the draft letter that the board received, I'd highly encourage board members to look through that draft and make sure what they are reading and recommending is still in line. The last, last month in August, we did a field trip looking at opportunities and issues the Forest is facing. From the user groups, the biggest issue was that the trails don't seem to connect and I'd like to reiterate that comment to the board.

Haugen: All recreationalists have invested interest in what is going on. You could multiple use all of it. It can work together, but what it comes down to is how much money can we afford to keep it maintained? The motorized world is paying its way for that. Back to his point about selling a permit to have in his wallet to be out there, why not? It makes perfect sense. In Arizona they charge a fee for hikers to park at the trailhead. They are paying for what they are using and we got to look at all of that. We can work together on this.

Haugen: I have one correction regarding NEPA. There is a paragraph in the bill regarding NEPA and there is some NEPA protection in there.

Kurtzman: In 2013, post Atlas, you ask, who is going to maintain these trails after the fact? Our crew put in 120 hours and the community opened up the other trails out there. We need to figure out how to tap into these resources to work as a community because right now everybody is doing their own thing.

ADJOURN

Brown: Are there any more comments? If not, could I have a motion to adjourn? Motion to adjourn at 4:45 p.m. by Josh Van Vlack; seconded by Linda Tokarczyk. The motion passed unanimously.

The Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m. Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 19, 2016